



WORKSHOP IN METHODS

Correspondence Audits: Design Issues and Practical Examples

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During the past decade, field experiments in the social and behavioral sciences have gained in popularity as the internet has made implementing experiments easier, cheaper, and faster. However, although researchers may have a conceptual knowledge of how experiments work, the actual experience of implementing a field experiment for the first time is often frustrating and time consuming. Researchers without prior experience often struggle with a number of issues such as navigating IRB, obtaining true random sampling and assignment, understanding blocking, and interpreting different types of treatment effects. The initial learning curve may be steep but the rewards are plentiful as experiments produce highly valued original data, lend themselves to causal analysis in ways that traditional survey data cannot, and become easier to implement as a researcher's experience level increases. This talk will introduce social scientists to the basics of a particular type of field experiment -- the correspondence audit -- and walk through a number of design issues that first time users often struggle with. Dr. Gaddis will provide practical examples from his own and others' work to illuminate some of the pitfalls of this method and help the audience gain confidence in embarking on their own field experiments.



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2-4pm



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